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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR, a Senator from the State of Minnesota.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, creator of summer and winter, teach us to appreciate life's seasons. May the snow and ice that surround us today remind us of our dependence on You in life's sunshine and shadows.

Sustain our Senators during this national season of challenge and uncertainty. Teach them that the One who designed the seasons can order their steps and direct their destinies. Meet their deepest needs with Your great power and love. Strengthen their resolve to press on in their efforts to do Your will.

As they grapple with complex issues, give them the peace of knowing that You are already working on solutions. Help them never to forget that You alone are the source of security, peace, and hope throughout the seasons of our years. We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD.)

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 14, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR, a Senator from the State of Minnesota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, today following whatever time the leaders might utilize, the Senate will be in morning business for 1 hour, with the time equally divided and Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Yesterday, cloture was invoked on the continuing funding resolution by a vote of 71 to 26. We need to run the 30 hours postcloture. Then all time will expire at 8:52 this evening.

Following morning business, we will resume consideration of the funding resolution.

I have had discussions with the Republican leader about other matters which we might consider prior to adjourning for the February recess. Among those would be several judicial nominations on which I have acknowledged on previous occasions we would be able to secure a time agreement. Members will be apprised of the likelihood or the possibility of votes today.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I would like to say that this 110th Congress,

when we came here, Democrats and Republicans alike had a real problem because the last Congress only funded the Government until February 15. With cooperation between Democrats and Republicans, difficult negotiations took place, but it was a situation where Senators COCHRAN and BYRD, who lead us in the Appropriations Committee, working with Chairman OBEY on the other side of the Capitol, together with all ranking members and all chairs of the subcommittees on both sides, worked through these difficult issues. And they were difficult. We had not enough money to do all that is necessary to be done, but we got it done without a single earmark. I know this was difficult.

There are issues that are so troubling. There is a Senator on the other side of the aisle, JOHNNY ISAKSON from Georgia. I don't know how you could find a nicer person in the world than JOHNNY ISAKSON. He is pleasant. He always has a smile on his face. He has an issue that is really important to him concerning children and health—something that should be in this bill. It is not.

KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, the senior Senator from Texas, has an issue dealing with BRAC that has bipartisan support. There are bases that we legislated closure for, and communities are having difficult times as a result of these base closures doing all that needs to be done, and we promised them money to allow these closures to go forward without as much concern and real hardship. But there wasn't anything we could do. If we had a single amendment on this bill, it had to go back for conference.

As a result of that, it would mean that very likely we couldn't complete this by tomorrow night at midnight. I have made commitments to a number of people that we are going to take care of these things in the supplemental which should be here the last week in March, and I am going to do

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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everything I can to make sure the process on the supplemental is as open and free as people think it should be. We will be as patient as we can be to work our way through this. I have told the distinguished Republican leader that vehicle will be open to amendments.

So I think we have done very good work. Legislation is the art of compromise and consensus building, and I appreciate very much the Republicans supporting this. There were some who didn't and I understand that and I understand why. What we did yesterday in invoking cloture on this bill is a step forward to allowing us to get the country's financial affairs in order. I have talked to Senator BYRD. I have spoken to Senator COCHRAN. I have spoken to the distinguished Republican leader. We are all going to do our very utmost this year to get appropriations bills done. We are going to be able to do that now that this CR is going to be out of the way either today early on or, if we can't work anything out, when the time expires tonight.

So, again, I want to express my appreciation publicly to everyone who worked on this matter. There were people who voted against the bill who were a part of the process of working things out. I have spent time on this issue with the senior Senator from New Mexico. I have spent a lot of time with him. He and I did that Energy and Water Subcommittee for many years as chairman and ranking member. We went back and forth. He didn't get everything he wanted, but he got quite a bit. I am not going to go through the whole rollcall of others with whom we worked on this to try to make it as easy a slide as possible. But anyway I am glad it is done. It is good for the country.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 574

Mr. REID. Madam President, I know there are Senators wishing to speak, but I just want to say a few more words on a different subject. First of all, S. 574 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title for a second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 574) to express the sense of Congress on Iraq.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to this bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

(The remarks of Mr. REID pertaining to the introduction of S. 579 and S. 588 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced bills and Joint Resolutions.")

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, and the time equally divided between the two sides.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator COBURN be recognized for up to 1 hour at 3:15 p.m. today, not to exceed the 1-hour time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Colorado, Mr. SALAZAR, be recognized following my remarks.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, on Monday the distinguished majority leader took to the floor and bemoaned the state of our economy, calling our economic future bleak. As surprised as I was by those comments, I thought it was even more important to come down to the floor and to respond and to provide, I think, a much different picture than that depicted by the distinguished majority leader.

It is ironic the same date those comments were made, the Associated Press reported a story that leads with this paragraph:

The deficit for the first four months of the current budget year is down sharply from the same period a year ago as the government continues to benefit from record levels of tax collections.

The Treasury Department reported Monday that the deficit for the budget year that began October 1 was down 57.2 percent from the same period a year ago.

That same article goes on to say:

The continued strong growth in revenues reflects the record profits corporations have been recording in recent years and the low levels of unemployment, which means more Americans are working and paying taxes.

If this is "bleak" economic news, I would love to see what good economic news might look like.

I have a few charts that provide a more accurate picture of exactly where we stand in terms of the American economy today. This first chart demonstrates for 21 consecutive quarters we have seen the U.S. economy grow, including the latest quarter where the economy grew by 3.5 percent.

We have seen since August 2003, employment has expanded over 41 consecutive months—creating 7.4 million new jobs in America. This timeframe is not accidental. In 2003, we passed some of the tax relief which is largely responsible for giving the American worker greater incentive to work hard and to save their money and invest it in their small business, thus creating jobs and opportunity for all Americans. This has created the sort of freedom that is always demonstrated in the strength of our burgeoning economy. It is as a result of not Government action per se but, rather, the freedom we have given the economy and the hard-working American taxpayer to keep more of what they earn and creating an incentive for them to work hard and be able to earn more to support their family and their way of life.

The third chart demonstrates the economic picture is not as the distinguished majority leader said, "bleak" but demonstrates that revenue to the Federal Treasury has exceeded all historical precedent. Indeed, this last projection is that in 2007 we will see it increase by 18.5 percent, and you can see above the line on this chart that represents historical averages. Each of the following years leading up to 2012 will exceed that historical average. Again, the economy is stronger than ever and continues to grow because of our current low tax and progrowth policies.

Unfortunately, this is a lesson that Washington sometimes forgets because when given the opportunity, the instinct of Washington is to increase Federal revenue by increasing taxes. I don't think you need to know much about human nature to know that high taxes decrease the incentive we all have to work hard. What that does is actually have a wet-blanket effect on the economy and on the ability of small businesses and employers to create jobs which create the kind of economic growth and the kind of revenue our tax system generates as a result of strong economic activity.

I am worried that even with the current continuing resolution that is in the Senate now that cuts \$3.1 billion from defense spending at a time when we are trying to bring our troops home from Europe and Asia and to provide them a place to come home to, that the solution offered by the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Appropriations is "Don't worry, we will add that money back in when we get to the supplemental appropriations bill."

The problem with that is the \$3.1 billion that has been spent out of the current continuing resolution or Omnibus appropriations bill on things other than our military, that money has now been spent on other programs that are favored by the new majority. What they are saying is, instead of spending \$3.1 billion, we will spend \$6.2 billion—the \$3.1 on things other than defense, but we will come back later and make the defense budget whole but in a way that aggravates the budget deficit.